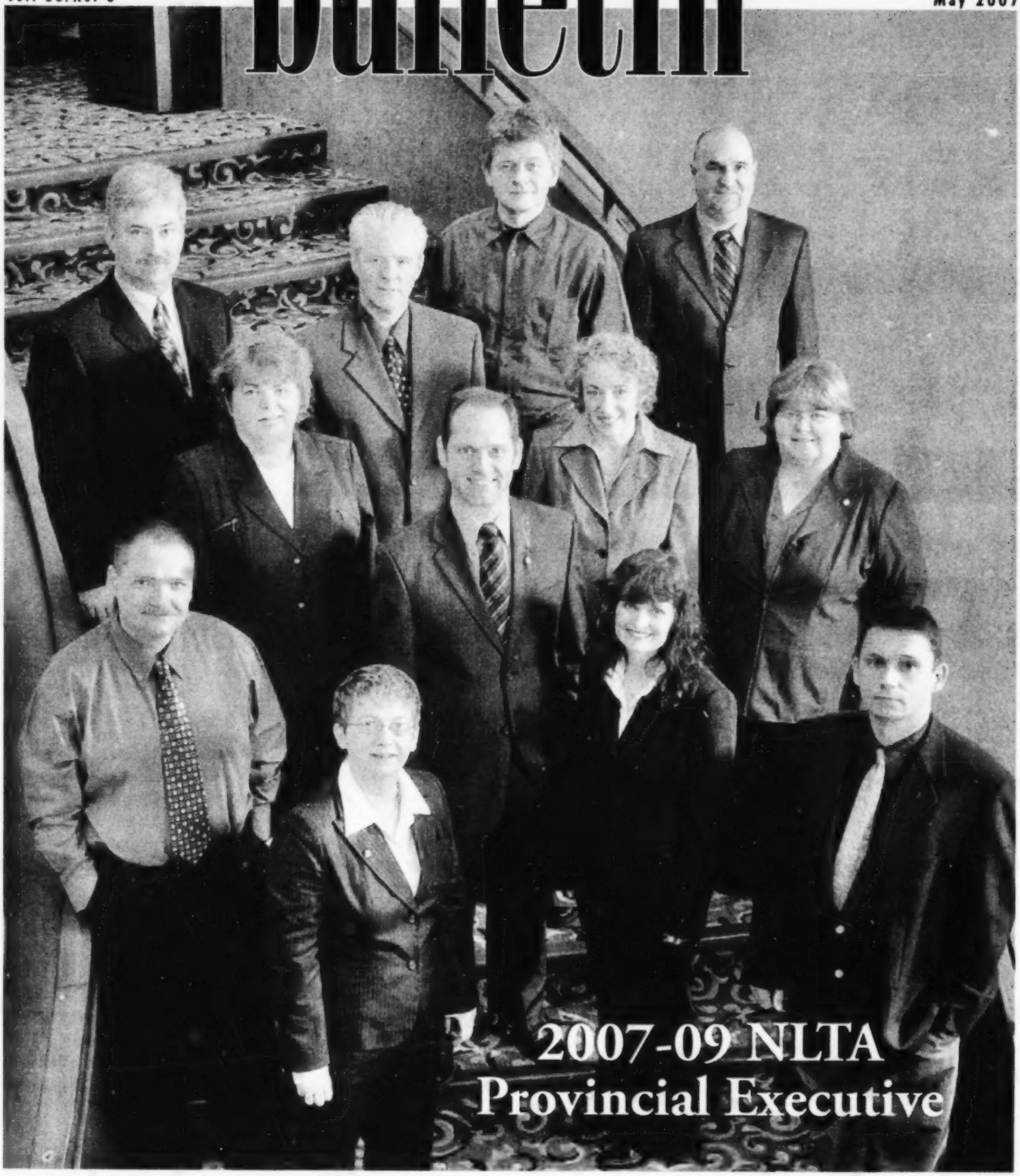
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

Vol. 50/No. 6

May 2007



2007-09 NLTA Provincial Executive

Up Front from the President

On April 11, I addressed delegates at the opening session of our 2007 Biennial General Meeting. The following are excerpts from my address. A copy of the full text is available on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca).

... In March of last year the Minister of Education announced that she would be establishing two commissions to review the Teacher Allocation Model and the ISSP/Pathways Model. ... We knew the impact that the implementation of any recommendations from these Commissions could have on the everyday working lives of teachers. ... While I cannot assure you, at this time, how or when government will act on these recommendations, I can assure you that the members of both Review Commissions have clearly heard every word that our teachers, through their committees, have had to say and I am completely convinced that the commissioners, in turn, have passed these messages directly on to our provincial government. ...

... It is for this reason that the pre-budget announcement ... by Minister Joan Burke was so discouraging. The present government continues to parade a long, detailed list of offerings in education in an attempt to convince the public that they are investing in the education of our children. This long list gives the appearance of really improving the learning environment. However, close scrutiny of the list reveals some noteworthy results. Yes, there is money allocated for Memorial University; yes, there is money for College of the North Atlantic; yes, there is money for the Marine Institute; and yes, there is money for the elimination of school fees, for school buses, for physical education and lab equipment and for skilled trades and technology. ...

... However, the most important part of the whole education formula, that part of education where the rubber hits the road, that part of education that makes the difference in a child's life, that part in the educational process that makes a difference in a teacher's ability to make a difference, that part of education where the actual teaching-learning occurs – the classroom – that is where the government's list falls short. The only money that has been allocated to the classroom, to the most important part of the whole process of education, is the money saved from not taking teachers that could have been taken away based on a formula that is already acknowledged by the Minister as no longer effective. This is not an investment. ...

... Let's be clear. The number of teachers allocated to school districts by the Department of Education has the greatest single impact on teaching and learning conditions in the classrooms of our province. We know that. The school boards know that. Government knows that. And parents and the public know that. And that is where resources must be placed if we are to see any real improvements in the learning conditions for students and the working conditions of teachers. ...

... there are major problems within the education system. They have been clearly told that the new model of educational delivery is much more demanding, and we can't expect it to work with the present resources in the system. To the degree that it has worked, teachers have made it work and that elastic band has been stretched far enough. The message has to go out that we have been patient long enough and the departmental rhetoric has to turn into action. ...

... I am pleased today to report to you that ... the Department of Education has agreed to put in place a joint working group to examine other models for student supervision and how having others do the supervision work in place of teachers might work. I view this as very good news. I am not saying that lunch time supervision will be eliminated, but I am saying that we are at least considering alternatives. It is my belief that this is a total waste of professional time, is totally non-academic, and in these demanding times, should be completely removed from our busy lives. ...

THE bulletin

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The Bulletin is published eight times a year during the school year by the Nfld. and Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1.
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Subscription Rate: $16 per year.
For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:
June Issue: May 1
Sept/Oct Issue: September 4

ISSN-1189-9662

Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

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Correction

The April issue of *The Bulletin* contained an article on Education Week and incorrectly listed Rosie Ryan as vice-principal of St. Thomas Aquinas School in Port-au-Port East. Ms. Ryan is the physical education teacher. The editor apologizes for the error.

Developing Successful Schools (DSS)

July 3-6, 2007
Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB

'Adaptive Schools' in Your School
An Instructional Leadership Institute for Administrators of Atlantic Canada

Program Overview

Leading sustainable improvement in learning and teaching is a complex, challenging and rewarding goal for any school leader.

Our Goals

- to explore the principles and implications of 'Adaptive Schools', from its powerful research base to practical implementation in today's Canadian schools
- to examine the leadership styles, skills and approaches that generate sustainable successful change in the way schools do business
- to reflect on our experience of change, and develop strategies that work
- to draw on the shared experience and support of the group to see our way forward
- to develop strategic and operational plans for our own schools for the coming year

Institute Resource Person - Claudette Landry

Claudette's experience includes service as a principal, program consultant, staff developer and classroom teacher. Her teaching spans 25 years of instruction involving all grades from Kindergarten through Grade 8. She has worked extensively with teachers and administrators in implementing effective instructional strategies and in developing collaborative communities that promote thinking, learning and human development.

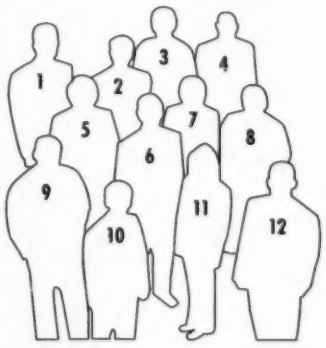
Registration/Fees

Educators who are members of the sponsoring organizations (NBTA, NLTA, NSTU & PEITF) - registration fee $300. All others $400. (Preference will be given to members of the sponsoring organizations.) All participants must pre-register. On-site check-in: Tuesday, July 3 (3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) in the Foyer of University Centre.

Application Form

Application forms are available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Forms Online".

Registration Deadline – June 1, 2007



2007-09 Executive

1. Gabriel Ryan
2. Paul Pinsent
3. James Dinn
4. Wade Verge
5. Jean Murphy
6. Sean Noah
7. Callista Burridge
8. Jackie Maloney
9. Derek Drover
10. Jeanne Williams
11. Lily Cole
12. Dean Ingram

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

NAIN, LABRADOR

Janeway Fund Raising Days at Jens Haven Memorial

The students of Jens Haven Memorial in Nain, Labrador have been involved in fund raising for the Janeway Children's Hospital since the mid 1990s. "Our best year for this fund raising effort was just last year where the students raised $1,000," said Wendy Marsh, Primary Special Education Teacher at Jens Haven Memorial.

Students from K-3 at Jens Haven Memorial.

As with previous years, money this year was raised in a number of different ways. Parents and teachers made treats that the children could buy during the school's Valentine's Day bake sales. For several days leading up to Valentine's Day, children paid a quarter to participate in various special days including Teddy Bear Day, Hockey Jersey Day, Hat Day, Crazy Hair Day, Pyjama Day, Sunshine Day, Culture Day, and Valentine's Day Colour Day. A Valentine's Day assembly was held in the primary school on February 14 where some games were played and the winners of the guessing games were announced. As well, a number of days were set aside where staff could wear jeans and pay a toonie each day with half of the proceeds donated to the Janeway.

Classes were challenged to see who could raise the most money within the primary, elementary, junior high/senior high sections of the school. This challenge seemed to generate the most money. In the primary school, the Grades 1 and 3 classes raised $393 and $350 respectively, while in the Grades 4-12 school, the Grades 8 and 5 classes raised $120 and $88 respectively. To recognize their efforts, these classes were awarded a movie/hot dog party one afternoon.

"Jens Haven Memorial did extremely well this year," said Ms. Marsh. "Over the span of three weeks, a final total of $2,400 was raised. This is wonderful to see! Fund raising for the Janeway has shown the students how important it is to donate to the Children's Hospital in our province. Congratulations to the students of Jens Haven Memorial on a job well done! We look forward to continuing our tradition next year of raising money for Janeway Day in the Schools."

HAPPY VALLEY

Penny Princess Fundraiser supports Janeway Day

Students and staff of Queen of Peace Middle School in Happy Valley, Labrador know how to have fun and help others at the same time. As part of the Penny Prince and Princess Event, Grade 7 students organized many fun activities to raise money for the Janeway Hospital and for school awards. Bake sales, kiss-a-grams and balloon-a-grams, fish pond and face painting as well as jeans, pyjama and crazy hair, crazy shoe and hat days were just some of the school-wide events. Hockey shoots, soccer shoots and basketball competitions rounded out the activities.

Sponsored by the Student Council and supported by students, staff and parents alike, the four Grade 7 classes competed to see who could raise the most money in one day. Each class elected a Penny Prince and Princess to oversee their efforts and planned activities for a given day. The event ended with a Penny Prince and Princess Dance on Friday, February 16. The entire event raised over $2,500 for the Janeway, the highest total ever in four days of fund raising.

"It's amazing to see the amount of spirit these children have," said Sandra Quigley. "The Grade 7's were wonderful organizers and the Grade 4, 5 and 6's were great supporters of the event. A special thank you has to be extended to the Grade 7 teachers who helped their classes plan and carry out their activities. We also have to send a big bouquet of thanks to parents for all their baking, donations, help and support with the activities."

The Penny Princess fundraiser has been a tradition at Queen of Peace School for many, many years and has funneled its contribution to the Janeway Day in the Schools through the Lake Melville Branch of the NLTA. "Even though we are located in Labrador, many of our children avail of the services of the Janeway Hospital. Almost everyone in our school knows someone who had to go to the Janeway at some time. It is really important to support this very worthwhile cause. As a safe and caring school, we care about the Janeway in a big way."

SPANIARD'S BAY

Learning through art

From February 19-28, 2007, elementary students of Holy Redeemer School in Spaniard's Bay actively participated in art classes presented by local artist, Valma Parsons, of Spaniard's Bay. Ms. Parsons visited the school and shared her art expertise, in particular painting, with the elementary students. This great learning experience was made possible through a grant received by the school from the Visiting Artist Program. Students and staff of Holy Redeemer School would like to thank Ms. Parsons for her time and effort and for sharing her many talents with them.

l-r: Doug Adams (Principal), Bobbi Harrington (teacher), Val Parsons (visiting artist), Deanne Deering (teacher), Lisa King (Vice-Principal)

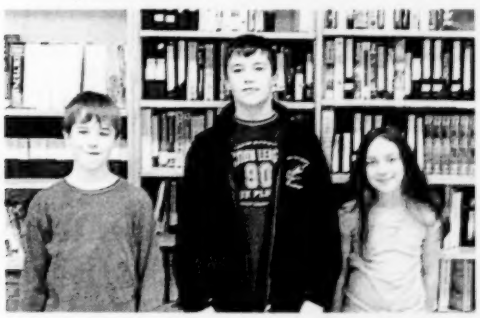
Heritage Fair a huge success

On March 7, 2007 all students in Grades 4, 5, and 6 at Holy Redeemer Elementary in Spaniard's Bay participated in the school's Annual Heritage Fair. Students were given an information package in January and asked to create an individual project around the provincial theme, *Where Once They Stood*.

"The Fair was a huge success and students produced projects that far surpassed even their teachers' expectations," said Ron Fagan, a Grade 7 teacher at Holy Redeemer Elementary. "Each project, though on a universal theme, was very unique as it represented each child's individual background."

Every student provided a visual and oral presentation for judging. "We would like to thank all family members who supported their children's efforts and helped them rise to the occasion. A very special thanks to Mr. W. Gosse, Chairman of the Spaniard's Bay-Tilton Heritage Committee, Mrs. W. Gosse, Member of the Committee and the three adjudicators who gave up their morning to help with this event: Mr. Tony Menchions, Ms. Ruby Reese, and Mr. John Drover. Thank you to Parent Volunteers Shelley Healey and Jodi Pryor who helped prepare a Newfoundland lunch for the Heritage Fair."

The students selected to represent Holy Redeemer at the Regional Heritage Fair to be held in Bay Roberts on May 11 and 12, 2007 are: Kelsei Drover (Grade 4); Cody Collins (Grade 5); and Michael Kennedy. (Grade 6).



l-r: Cody Collins (Grade 5), Michael Kennedy (Grade 6), Kelsei Drover (Grade 4).

ST. ANTHONY

Healthy Students, Healthy Schools

As part of the Healthy Students, Healthy Schools initiative, students and teachers at St. Anthony Elementary have been busy with food programs and numerous physical activities. The school offers a very nutritious selection of foods in its cafeteria. The lunch program features a variety of wraps, soups, salads, and pastas. Milk, water and juice are the beverages of choice. For the breakfast program, supported by the local Kids Eat Smart Committee, enriched 'Smart' white bread is offered for toast as well as fruit, yogurt, and a variety of healthy cereals.

To support the Kids Eat Smart Breakfast Program, a school dance was held. Admission for the dance was an item of food for the breakfast program. As well, the staff, students and members of the community participated in the annual 'Walk to Breakfast' at which time food items were brought in by the students in aid of the breakfast program. These events helped support the breakfast program and promote active living.

A variety of physical activities keep the students at St. Anthony Elementary very active. Skipping and floor hockey intramurals take place after school each week. The school had received an IGA grant for $15,000 to promote outdoor healthy living. The funds were used to purchase equipment to use outdoors for sports activities, i.e. skis, snowshoes, soccer nets, etc. Snowshoeing and skiing were part of the physical education program offered to students during the winter months. The school also has a ski club in which more students will now be able to participate as 20 new pairs of skis and boots have been purchased. The ski club uses the local ski trails to which students and teacher volunteers are bussed one day a week after school.

An annual Sports Day took place in March, at which time the whole school participated in outdoor physical activities.

Public Health representatives visited the school in January to have students view the 'Toxic Tunnel' and participate in activities to educate students about the health dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke.

Students from St. Anthony Elementary take part in a ski program to promote outdoor healthy living.

ST. JOHN'S

Presentation made to NLTA Christmas Card Contest winner

On April 3, Brandon Tilley, a Grade 4 student at St. George's Elementary in Conception Bay South, was presented with a framed copy of his winning design for the 2007 NLTA Christmas Card Contest. NLTA President, Kevin Foley, presented Brandon with his award-winning design at a school assembly attended by students and teachers from his school.

Brandon's design will be featured on the NLTA Christmas card that will be sent to schools, businesses and other groups in December 2007. Brandon also received a $100 cash award for his winning entry.

NLTA President Kevin Foley presents Brandon Tilley, shown here with his mother, with a framed copy of his winning design for the 2007 NLTA Christmas Card.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Margaret Williams Trust Fund Award

Applications are now invited for the Margaret Williams Trust Fund Award which has been established to promote the development of librarianship in Newfoundland and Labrador. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to applicants seeking funding for library-related projects or assistance in pursuing graduate studies in librarianship, archival studies, or teacher librarianship.

This year's award is $2,000. Deadline for applications is Friday, May 18, 2007.

For further information and an application form contact: Mr. Richard Ellis, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Margaret Williams Trust Fund, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University, St. John's, NL A1B 3Y1. Applications may also be obtained at www.mun.ca/library; click the appropriate link under News.

Educational events planned for World Oceans Day 2007

Since 1993, Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Newfoundland and Labrador has celebrated World Oceans Day on June 8 by hosting special events and activities that promote ocean health.

The department teamed up again this year with a number of federal, provincial, municipal and community partners to plan and support World Oceans Day activities in Newfoundland and Labrador; to promote local and regional venues to highlight how Canadians can be effective water stewards.

The Oceans Day Committee is planning two fun-filled interactive educational events for Friday, June 8, 2007 in St. John's – at the Fluvarium on Nagle's Place and the Marine Institute on Ridge Road for students in Grades 4, 5, and 6. Both locations will offer great opportunities for elementary students to learn about the importance of protecting oceans, freshwater bodies and the species that live within them.

Similar to last year, students will enjoy presentations, activities and interactive sessions. They may have an opportunity to touch live lobsters, crabs and other species, to look through and learn about night vision binoculars, listen to whale sounds, play a game about the biology and conservation of species, view a real life watershed and so much more.

In addition, this year the Committee is hosting two contests for primary and elementary students – information sheets were sent to schools in March. Teachers were invited to ask their students to use their artistic ability to explain what the ocean means to them in a drawing and poster contest. Students have the chance to win art supplies for their school and an individual prize. Deadline date is May 14, 2007.

For details on how to register for this year's events, call Fisheries and Oceans Canada at 709-772-7624.

Committee Member Sought for Group Insurance Committee

The Group Insurance Committee, which oversees the NLTA Group Insurance Program, operates out of St. John's and usually holds approximately four meetings per year. Committee members are chosen each year in June by the Provincial Executive Council following a recommendation from the President. For 2007-08 there will be at least one vacancy on the Committee. If you are interested in volunteering for this committee, please contact Geralyn Costello, Assistant to the President, at 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, Ext. 222, or e-mail: gcostello@nlta.nl.ca by **May 18**. Please include in your message your name, address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers where you can be contacted.

Please Note: A request for volunteers for the remaining provincial committees operating during 2007-08 will be included in the June edition of *The Bulletin*.

GET INVOLVED - JOIN A PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE

Fishery Officer for a Day 2007

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is pleased to announce its 2007 Fishery Officer for a Day Contest. The contest was originally launched as a pilot project in 2003 and has been an annual contest for high school students in the province ever since. The concept is to get high school students thinking about how they, and their communities, can help conserve our ocean and freshwater resources, specifically issues focused on domestic overfishing and/or poaching.

The contest is open to all high school students in all five school districts. Entries will be based on a two-part question: How are fish important to your community and to your province?; and, What can you, and your community, do to reduce or stop poaching, and to conserve and protect fish? Entries can be submitted using one of seven format options. All entries must be completed individually. Some of the entry choices may require additional assistance from other parties, but due to the type of prize being awarded, only the individual student who submits the entry may be selected as a winner.

Teachers may assign the contest or students may enter the contest voluntarily. If the contest is a class assignment, only the top five projects should be entered into the competition. Prizes will be awarded to one first place winner from all entries as well as a runner up from each participating high school. All entries must be postdated no later than May 11, 2007.

The contest winner will spend a day in the field with a fishery officer and have an opportunity to see first-hand what a fishery officer does and what skills are required to become one. The prize may include patrolling the waters in their area by boat or plane as well as other interesting activities. The first prize winner will also receive a gift package from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. A runner up will also be chosen from each participating high school district and will also receive a gift package. The winner's homeroom teacher will receive a gift package as well.

For more information, please contact: Jackey Locke, Communications Officer, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, (709) 772-7630, lockej@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

SONIA (WELLS) BOUTCHER, 1935–2007

Sonia was born in Sandyville, Hermitage, one of five children in the Wells family. She spent her childhood totally immersed in books that were usually supplied by her mother. She was often caught reading under the covers late at night and told stories of getting out of doing chores because she was studying or reading.

It was not surprising that Sonia always wanted to be a teacher. When she completed her teacher training she began her career in a small school on the west coast and then eventually taught in St. John's.

As the remedial reading teacher at Cowan Heights Elementary, Sonia was able to help hundreds of students who came to her classroom. Her passion for books was instilled in her students and her ability to help children learn to read was inspiring. She was a firm, fair, intelligent and capable teacher who held the respect of her students and colleagues.

When she retired, her friends often wondered how she would spend her time. Sonia never really left her love of teaching as she continued to help students by tutoring them privately. She touched many lives and became like family as she guided these students through their learning until they graduated.

With many of her friends and family, Sonia would share books or recommend books and always knew the current best sellers. She continued to be an avid reader throughout her retirement years and would often stay up at night to finish a 'good read'.

Sonia was an incredible woman who was greatly admired by her friends. It was always a pleasure to visit for an afternoon tea or attend a special event because you knew you would be treated like royalty. Sonia loved to entertain and spent hours planning and preparing. Her close friends were dear to her and she became their confidante and support over the years. They highly valued her reliability, integrity and honesty.

As a mother, Sonia worked patiently and diligently and raised a beautiful, confident and well-respected daughter. Faith was her life. Sonia was proud of Faith's accomplishments and shared all of her momentous occasions with family and friends.

Faith and Vincent brought great joy into Sonia's life. When Eamonn and Aisling were born they fulfilled her dream of becoming a grandmother. She then had more reasons than ever to continue buying children's books and delighted in spending time reading with them. She kept every picture, every card, every scribble and every drawing that these two precious grandchildren produced. Sonia dearly loved her family.

During the past three years, Sonia had to face the most challenging time of her life. She fought her illness with courage, strength and determination. Her attitude and endurance were an inspiration. We all will truly miss this wonderful woman. We have been blessed by the impact she has had on our lives.
(Submitted by Diane Howse, family friend.)

Sonia Boutcher

MELVIN RAYFIELD BOWN, 1944–2006

It is with saddened hearts and deep sorrow that we, the family of Melvin Bown, announce his sudden passing on April 19, 2006. On that day we lost a treasured husband, father, grandfather, son and brother.

Dad was born in Twillingate to Howard and Gertrude (née Coles) Bown. He grew up on Change Islands, the oldest of nine children. His father encouraged him to get a good education, so he completed Grade 10 at Joe Batt's Arm and Grade 11 at Lewisporte. He then completed a Bachelor of Arts (Education) in 1972, a Bachelor of Arts in 1974 and a Masters of Education in 1990 from Memorial University.

Dad began his teaching career at the United Church School in Flower's Cove when he was 16 years old. It was there that he met our Mom, Joyce Parrill of Pines Cove. After they married, he taught at Change Islands, Carmanville and Rocky Harbour. During this time they had four children, Rodney, David, Stephen, and Jocelyn. In 1973 we moved to St. Anthony where, for ten years, he taught Basic Training and Skills Development at the District Vocational School. In 1985 we moved to Port Aux Basques where he spent the last 19 years of his career as a Special Education teacher and part-time librarian at St. Jame's Junior High School. He retired in October 2004.

During his teaching career of more than 38 years Dad held many positions. He was teacher and principal in two-room schools, grades K-9. He taught in elementary, junior and high schools. He taught both adults and children. Dad was happiest, however, when working with Special Needs students. His greatest pleasure was helping them reach their potential. He firmly believed that reading was the key to success and worked tirelessly to promote books and libraries. He spent countless hours reading books so that he could recommend them to his students, sharing his passion for reading with all those who would listen.

Since his passing, we have heard some remarkable comments from his students and colleagues. Many students have referred to him as 'a wonderful teacher'. His colleagues have described him as 'a true professional in every sense of the word', 'a teacher always striving for the best to impart knowledge to his students' and 'a man who was interested in learning and always committed to education'. We, of course, always knew this, but it is a pleasure to hear such wonderful comments.

Melvin Bown

Mary Murray

To say that Dad was a dedicated teacher is an understatement, but the love he held for his family really brought a light to his eyes. He enjoyed every moment he spent with his nine grandchildren and one great grandchild. He especially cherished the time he spent with us 'up to the cabin'. The cabin was where he taught us what a barbecue really was. He would be proud to know that we still have barbecues 'up to the cabin'. He may not be here in body, but always in our hearts.

During his life, Dad sponsored many children through World Vision. He wanted children in less fortunate countries to have the things that so many of us take for granted. In recognition of his life's work, Mom, his wife of 42 years and four children will continue to sponsor a child through World Vision in his memory.

Thanks, Dad, for being such a wonderful influence in the lives that you have touched. Till we meet again…
(Submitted by his daughter Jocelyn.)

HANNAH (SHEEHAN) FOWLER, 1912 – 2006

Hannah Fowler

Count your age by friends,
Not years.
Count your life by smiles.
Not tears.
God bless you all
And start the music.

These inspirational words were the motto of Hannah Beatrice Fowler. She was a daughter of Michael Sheehan and Agnes Foley. There were four boys and six girls in the family and Hannah reminded us with a smile, "I am the only branch left on the tree now."

When she completed Grade 10 at age 16, she was appointed sole charge of St. Patrick's All Grade School in Cappahayden. Hannah held this position for almost 20 years until she retired in 1954 with a pension of $10 a month.

Hannah had a zest for life and would say, "Enjoy every moment of life in God's beautiful world." She loved teaching, was a dedicated member of the profession and a proud member of her Association as well as St. Patrick's Church in Cappahayden. She loved music, gardening, milking cows, picking berries, drying fish and helping with the garden party.

Everyone who has ever been "up the Shore" would know of Hannah's hospitality and indeed many a stranger has stayed there during winter storms. You would be welcomed at the door by her adorable singing dogs Missey and Buddy.

Hannah was intensely proud of her Irish ancestry and her love of her family. Since Hannah's passing on September 14 the community of Cappahayden has not been the same. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her daughters Agnes, Shirley (Kevin) and their daughter Allison. The likes of her will never be seen again.

Ni bheidh a leitheid i aris ann.
(Submitted by Michael Boyle, former President of the NLTA Southern Shore Branch and a friend of the family.)

MARY (MEANEY) MURRAY, 1934–2006

Mary was born and raised in a family of five brothers and three sisters in Riverhead, St. Mary's Bay. A promising student, she skipped a grade, and at the age of 16 she won a scholarship to Littledale where she attended St. Bride's College. There, she completed the Nova Scotia Grade 12 curriculum as well as teacher training through Memorial College. Later in her career she returned to complete her B.A. in English from Memorial University.

She accepted her first teaching position for the 1952-53 school year at Fox Harbour, Placentia Bay. She fondly recalled her first day in the classroom as an 18-year-old teacher. It was the first day of school for her primary school class too. She marveled that all the eyes on their little faces were staring up at her, waiting to be taught, and she wasn't sure how to begin. She decided to start simply by reading them a story. The little children were rapt with attention, and the career of a wise and confident teacher began.

From 1953-55 she taught at Point La Haye, St. Mary's Bay. She served as Principal of the school in her second year. She often recalled fondly the times she had there with friends and colleagues.

From 1955-58 she taught at St. Joseph's School on Quidi Vidi Road in St. John's, where she had every opportunity to indulge her taste in the latest clothing styles offered in the downtown shops. She spent time during the summers at home in Riverhead with her family, except one summer when she went on a European tour. This experience was a cherished memory of hers, and she and her future husband would take many such trips together.

From there, she went on to St. Joseph's Academy in Gander. In 1958 Gander was a mecca for people throughout the province. The International Airport was in its heyday and many young, energetic Newfoundlanders moved to the town in the late 1950s and early 1960s. She first lived at the Teacher's Residence at the old Gander Townsite with the other single female teachers. One day she got a call from Michael Murray, a young Radio Operator with Transport Canada. He had seen her in church and was determined to meet her. Needless to say, they hit it off and a romance bloomed. They married in 1960, and she and Michael raised three sons – Michael, Paul and Sean.

Mary taught at St. Joseph's until her retirement in 1989. Although she taught at all grade levels throughout her career, she taught grades one and two for much of her time at St. Joseph's. In those years, she demonstrated a true vocation for the teaching profession. She really loved children and she cared deeply for all of the little ones in her classes. She missed them at the end of the year when they went on to higher grades, but she often found them knocking on her classroom door at recess time or ringing the doorbell at her house during the summer, returning to visit their favourite teacher.

As every teacher knows, there are always some students who come from less than ideal home situations, and she was always especially attentive to their needs. She would go out of her way to help them, to show them love and attention, to praise them when they were good and doing their best, and to offer extra encouragement when it was needed.

Although she was sad to leave the classroom when she retired, she had made her mark in life by making such an impact on the lives of others. She took great personal satisfaction in reflecting on the many years she enjoyed as a teacher, and she cherished those memories for the rest of her life.
(*Submitted by the Murray family.*)

JOHN JACOB PARSONS, 1928–2006

John Jacob (Jake) Parsons passed away at his home in St. John's on August 14, 2006 in the presence of his family. He leaves to mourn his wife Effie, of 54 years, sons Donald and Derek (Laurie), and grandchildren Jacob, Elise, John Derek, Stephen and Luke.

Jacob Parsons, one of the most respected educators on the Newfoundland scene, was named Fellow of the Canadian College of Teachers in 1982. This honour not only illustrated the respect in which he was held by the teaching profession, but was also a credit to the Avalon Consolidated School Board of which he was Deputy Superintendent and to this province as a whole.

Born at Ochre Pit Cove, Jake received his schooling there and at Western Bay graduating with a Grade 11 honours certificate. He then embarked on a career as an educator that spanned four decades. He began as principal of two-room schools in New Chelsea and Norris Arm. Later, he returned to university to advance his studies. His academic achievements include B.A., B.Ed., and M.A. (History) degree from Memorial University. He also studied at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto where he received his M.Ed. in Administration.

In the early 1950s he moved to St. John's where he became a classroom teacher and later vice-principal of Macpherson Academy. From 1960 to 1974 he served as vice-principal and then principal of United Collegiate (now Prince of Wales Collegiate). In 1974 he accepted a position as Assistant Superintendent and later became Deputy Superintendent of the Avalon Consolidated School Board, a post he held until his retirement in 1988. During his venue with the school board, he chaired and directed a committee to develop a three-year Business Education Programme for Grades 9 to 11. He also initiated and implemented a programme for the evaluation of schools within the Avalon Consolidated School Board that was aimed at improving the efficiency of schools and encouraging a continuous self-evaluation of teachers. He also researched and proposed a program to integrate disabled students into the mainstream school system. Throughout his tenure with the school board he headed many studies and authored numerous reports aimed at improving the school system for the benefit of both teachers and students.

Jake was one of the first teachers from Newfoundland to be accepted as a member of the Canadian College of Teachers (CCT) in 1959, only two years after the college was inaugurated. He was a charter member of the St. John's Cabot Chapter of the CCT formed in 1965 and served as Publicity Officer, Secretary, Vice-President and President. He also served as a member of the national sub-committee to review CCT's goals and objectives. Mr. Parsons was a member of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association where he chaired a committee to review and report on teaching training programmes. He also served as a member of the School Administration Association.

Jake was also active outside the teaching profession. He taught Sunday school, served on many boards including the Board of Management for St. James United Church. He was also chairman of Coughlan College United Church Board in St. John's.

In 1956, Jake undertook Officer's Training at Camp Borden in New Brunswick and was awarded a commission as Second Lieutenant. Following training, he served several years as a Cadet Training Officer with an Army Cadet Corps at Macpherson Academy.

In 1980, Jake was invited to join St. John's Northwest Rotary and served as President from 1985-86. He was named a Paul Harris Fellow in 1989 and was made an Honorary Member in 2003. He was also an avid and enthusiastic member of Rotary International.

Throughout his life and especially through his work as an educator, Jacob Parsons was a selfless contributor to his community. His contributions were greatly appreciated by the many people whose lives he touched and enriched. He will be greatly missed.
(*Submitted by his son, Don Parsons.*)

John Jacob Parsons

Pre-Retirement Seminars

Teachers within two years of retirement eligibility should register for one of the NLTA's seven Pre-Retirement Seminars scheduled to be held in the fall of 2007 in Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. (Please note: consideration will be given to combining seminars if registration numbers are sufficiently low in a particular seminar.) These seminars are held in accordance with Association policy as part of its overall program of pre-retirement counselling. Clause 18.12 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 29.12 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement provide two days paid leave to attend these seminars.

Information sessions will deal with topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Severance Pay, Employment Insurance, NLTA Group Insurance, Financial and Estate Planning and the Canada Pension Plan. As well, time is available for individual counselling of prospective retirees by the various consultants.

Things You Should Know About Attending

- Potential participants must register with the NLTA for a particular seminar and apply to their Board office for leave.
- Only those teachers eligible to retire during or before June 2010 will be eligible to attend.
- Registration must be received at the NLTA Office at least four weeks in advance to ensure approval of attendance.
- The Association reserves the right to refuse acceptance of registration at any particular seminar if the registration forms have not been received at the NLTA office in accordance with Association policy.
- It is the responsibility of the individual participant to make arrangements and pay for hotel accommodations, should any be required. Please reference that you are attending an NLTA function and the hotel should provide a reduced rate which is available to the NLTA.
- Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the following provisions:
  i) participants shall be reimbursed the lesser of travel by private vehicle or public transportation to the seminar closest to the place of residence. In the event that a teacher requests and is accepted to attend a seminar other than the closest seminar, the participant shall only be reimbursed the amount applicable for travel to the closest seminar.
  ii) payment for travel in a private vehicle shall be at the rate of 12¢ per kilometre for the return trip from residence to seminar site.
  iii) travel via public transportation will be reimbursed at the rate of 80 percent of ferry, taxi, or economy airfare; in the case of airfare, the lesser of excursion (seat sale) or 80 percent of economy airfare will be paid, where excursion (seat sale) fares can be arranged. Receipts shall be required for all reimbursement.
  iv) no expenses will be paid to participants living or teaching in the community where the seminar is held.
  v) a spouse is welcome to accompany the participating teacher to the pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be covered.
- All other expenses, such as meals, accommodation and child care, are the responsibility of the participating teacher.
- Expenses will be provided for one pre-retirement seminar only and a teacher participant shall be permitted to attend one seminar only. (Notwithstanding this, a teacher may attend a second seminar as a spouse.)
- Teachers must attend the seminar location closest to their place of residence, except in cases where the mode, cost or availability of transportation necessitates otherwise.
- Directors and Assistant Directors, and spouses, are welcome to attend one pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be paid in accordance with this policy.

Given the large number of teachers eligible to retire, we reserve the right to limit the number of people who will be granted access, depending on the physical facilities available at each site. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers plan ahead and register early in the event that registrations have to be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

NOTE: The full text of the NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars and the application form can be found on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). A link on the main page called "Forms Online" will bring you to the applicable form and policy. The NLTA policy will also be mailed to teachers with confirmation of registration.

2007 Pre-Retirement Seminar

REGISTRATION FORM

Name

Home Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Social Insurance Number

School Name

School Telephone

Please check which session you will be attending:

- ☐ **Oct. 11-12** – Hotel Gander, Gander
- ☐ **Oct. 18-19** – Holiday Inn, Stephenville
- ☐ **Oct. 25-26** – Mt. Peyton, Grand Falls-Windsor
- ☐ **Nov. 8-9** – Greenwood Inn, Corner Brook
- ☐ **Nov. 22-23** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Nov. 29 - 30** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Dec. 6-7** – Holiday Inn, St. John's

Will your spouse be attending? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of spouse (if attending)

Earliest eligibility date for pension

Have you attended a previous pre-retirement seminar?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Note:
- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2010) are eligible to attend.
- All participants must pre-register.
- You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
- Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
- Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:

Melanie Jaster
Benefits and Economic Services Division,
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 *(toll free)*

NOTE: As space is limited, registrations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

FOR NLTA OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Received	Confirmation Sent	Information Package Sent

Biennial General Meeting 2007

Hands Up for Education

The NLTA's Biennial General Meeting was held from April 10-13, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in St. John's. The BGM is the major decision-making forum of the NLTA.

On the first day there was an orientation session for new delegates, alternates and observers, a budget briefing session, and the "Meet the Candidates" session where delegates heard election statements by Provincial Executive candidates. There were 16 people running for ten positions and the new Executive was elected on Thursday morning. The 2007-09 Provincial Executive are: Callista Burridge (Deer Lake), James Dinn (St. John's), Derek Drover (Gaultois), Dean Ingram (Clarenville), Jackie Maloney (Marystown), Jean Murphy (Cow Head), Paul Pinsent (Stephenville), Gabriel Ryan (Holyrood), Wade Verge (Lewisporte), and Jeanne Williams (Bonavista). Three members of the Provincial Executive – Bill Chaisson, Dana Burridge and Wayne Park – who made the decision not to return to Executive, had the opportunity to address the delegates. Each thanked their branches and schools for their support during their terms on Executive and provided some highlights of their terms of office.

Sessions were held throughout the BGM on by-law changes, resolutions, policy changes from Executive and Joint Council, the 2007-09 and 2008-09 Association budgets, group insurance auditor's report, the mid-year report to Convention and the report of the 2005-07 NLTA priorities.

Several individuals addressed the Convention including NLTA President Kevin Foley, President-elect Sean Noah and Vice-President elect Lily Cole. Invited guests who addressed the delegates included Dave Denine, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education; Winston Carter, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation; Don Case, President of the Retired Teachers' Association; Dr. Tim Seifert, Association Dean, Graduate Programs, Faculty of Education, Memorial University; Denise Pike, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils; Nada Borden, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association; and Leo Whelan, Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Directors of Education.

Some of the highlights of the BGM included a presentation by John Staple, Deputy Secretary General of the Canadian Teachers' Federation on "Threats to Quality Public Education" and a Panel Discussion on "Teacher/School Safety" with representatives from the Department of Education, O'Dea Earle Law Firm, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the School Administrators Council.

As well, numerous awards and presentations took place at BGM 2007. Dr. Myrle Vokey was made Honorary Member of the NLTA; Winston Carter was presented with the 2007 Allan Bishop Award; Fred Wood (2006), Douglas Parsons and Frank Crews (2007) were each presented with the Bancroft Award; Mary Dinn (2006) and Christopher Cooper (2007) were each presented with the Barnes Award; Philip Wood (2006) and S. Nicole Burt (2007) were each presented with the Special Recognition Award. The first Patricia Cowan Award for Support and Promotion of Education was presented to Denise Pike; and the President's Award was presented to Dana Burridge.

President Kevin Foley gave his closing remarks to BGM and the installation of the new President took place just before the close of BGM. President-elect Sean Noah begins his term of office on August 1, 2007.

More coverage of BGM 2007, including award winners and resolutions, will be published in the June 2007 issue of *The Bulletin*.

Winston Carter, President of the Canadian Teachers Federation, addresses delegates.

Denise Pike, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils brings greeting on behalf of the Federation.

Don Case, President of the Retired Teachers' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador brings greetings on behalf of the RTANL.

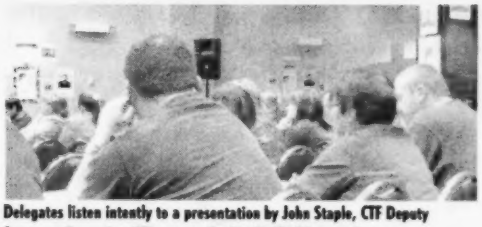
Delegates from Ingornachoix and Humber branches review the mid-year report from Provincial Executive.

Vice President-Elect Lily Cole addresses Convention delegates.

Danielle Lodge, a Level III student at Holy Heart High School in St. John's and Brittany Pike, a first year Music student at Memorial University perform for delegates at the opening session of BGM 2007.

President Kevin Foley delivers his opening address to Convention delegates.

NLTA President Kevin Foley receives a standing ovation from delegates following his opening address.



Delegates listen intently to a presentation by John Staple, CTF Deputy Secretary General on "Threats to Quality Public Education".

NLTA President Kevin Foley administers the Oath of Office to President-Elect Sean Noah.

NLTA Administrative Officer, Stefanie Tuff, moderates a panel discussion on "Teacher/School Safety".

NLTA Administrative Officer Don Ash presents the Group Insurance Auditor's Report along with Bill Lowe, Senior Vice President, Consulting with Johnson's Inc. and Bill Chaisson, Chair or the NLTA Group Insurance Committee.

Delegates consider resolutions put forth by Branches and Special Interest Councils.

Teacher Certification: Issues to be Aware of

by STEFANIE TUFF

It's that time of year again when many teachers are planning to head back to school themselves during the summer, pursuing further training which will lead to enhanced job performance and, if they meet the requirements for certification upgrading, increased salaries as well. New graduates will soon be applying for certification and more experienced educators may be considering applying for administrative positions.

While some teachers may finish their careers having dealt with the Teacher Certification Division of the Department of Education on only one occasion – that being when they made their initial application for a teaching certificate – this is not true for all. Many others are in contact with Teacher Certification personnel from time to time for various reasons, such as: certificate upgrading; administrative allowance/bonus applications; credit for teaching service in other provinces; and, Review Panel hearings and appeals. The purpose of this article is to provide some basic information and advice for teachers facing issues that fall within the jurisdiction of Teacher Certification.

Once a person has been certified as a teacher, the most common reason for further contact with Teacher Certification officials is certificate upgrading. Under provincial legislation (the Teacher Training Act and Teacher Certification Regulations) the responsibility for approving applications for upgrading rests with the Registrar of Teacher Certification, Mr. Robert Parsons. The Regulations set out the educational requirements for each level of certification and Mr. Parsons reviews each application and determines whether the requirements for the certificate level being sought have been met. All programs of study must be approved by the Registrar before they will be accepted for certification purposes. Therefore, it is extremely important that teachers who are planning to invest in further education in order to qualify for a higher level of teacher certification first check with Mr. Parsons' office to ensure that the program they are considering has been approved and complies with the Regulations.

Under Article 21.07 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 23.06 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement), teachers can receive service credit, and the corresponding salary increments, for teaching service and for certain categories of work experience other than regular and substitute teaching in this province. However, this does not happen automatically. An application must be submitted to Teacher Certification, along with confirmation of the nature and duration of the work experience for which credit is being sought. Applications for transferring teaching service are available from the Teacher Certification office. Teacher Certification is also responsible for approving applications for the bonuses and allowances paid to department heads, guidance counselors, and specialist teachers.

The Registrar of Teacher Certification oversees the process by which teaching certificates may be suspended or canceled in certain cases. For example, the Teacher Training Act states that the certificate of a teacher who terminates his/her teaching contract without giving the proper notice set out in the Collective Agreement may be suspended for up to one year. These types of cases are heard by the Teacher Certification Review Panel and teachers are given an opportunity to present their case before a decision is made. The Registrar is not a member of the Review Panel but is responsible for arranging hearing dates and locations and for ensuring that all parties have received the necessary information and documentation for the proceedings. If a teacher's certificate is suspended or terminated by the Review Panel, the Registrar will notify the other provincial teacher certification authorities of this decision, which could impact on a teacher's status of or eligibility for certification in other Canadian jurisdictions.

Decisions of the Registrar on applications for initial certification or upgrading, and decisions of the Review Panel can be appealed within certain time limits. Mr. Parsons can be contacted at the Department of Education, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6, Tel: 709-729-3020, e-mail: robparsons@gov.nl.ca. Teachers who have concerns about a Teacher Certification issue are advised to contact the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

TWO LOCATIONS –
MAY 8, CORNER BROOK & MAY 10, ST. JOHN'S

7TH ANNUAL PROVINCIAL FAIR

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

The Fair will profile job opportunities and related information for students, teachers or others interested in entry into the profession.

Come by to see the displays, talk to prospective employers, and collect information.
It's a chance to discover what's available for teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Are you looking for a job in education?
Are you an Education graduate?
Substitute teacher?
Or looking for a career change?

The Provincial Teacher Recruitment Fair is the place for you.

Date: Tuesday, May 8, 2007
11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Place: Gymnasium
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College,
Corner Brook

Date: Thursday, May 10, 2007
11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Place: Atrium of the Inco
Innovation Centre
Memorial University
St. John's

Information booths will be set up by:

- Department of Education
- Faculty of Education
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
- School Districts

and other Educational Partners

Go Healthy - By Taking Care of Yourself

by KATHY TAYLOR-ROGERS

Common sense dictates that if you do not take care of yourself then you will not be able to take care of anyone else, but unfortunately common sense is not all that "common". Isn't it ironic that for most of us we never neglect to get the regular check-ups, tune-ups, oil changes, etc. for our vehicles because we know that without providing the regular needed care and maintenance our car will not last as long or will give us problems. Many of us, however, do not ensure that we receive the same care for ourselves. Car owners quickly learn that the key to keeping a vehicle in "good" running order is regular vehicle maintenance. The same is true for our bodies. Every one of us should have a medical check-up at least once per year. This check-up should include measurement of your blood cholesterol level and a diabetes screen. If you are over 40 years of age then yearly blood work is recommended to check: insulin levels, blood sugar, total cholesterol, HDL Cholesterol and Triglycerides, TSH, Vitamin D level, PSA (for men), weight and blood pressure. For sexually active women yearly pap smears are recommended. For men, yearly prostate examinations are recommended if you are over 40 years of age. Eye examinations are essential for men and women over age 40.

Having these regular yearly check-ups will assist in ensuring that if there are health concerns (i.e. high blood pressure, high cholesterol) that could potentially lead to more serious health problems then the steps can be taken to deal with the concern area before it becomes more serious or problematic. Keep in mind that heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death in Canada. Risk factors associated with heart disease and stroke are: smoking, high blood pressure, diets rich in saturated fats, physical inactivity, stress, diabetes, family history of heart disease, and being overweight. If through yearly check-ups the presence of risk factors can be identified and a plan developed to make changes to minimize or eliminate the risk factors then you will be taking a positive step towards improving your health. There are some risk factors, such as heredity, that you have no control over; hence the need to take control of those factors that you can.

Any research on taking care of your physical health will emphasize three very key components. The first of these is maintaining a "healthy weight". To do this you need to set getting your weight under control as a goal for you and then determine how you plan to achieve this goal. The second component of positive physical health is having a 'proper diet'. The key to a proper diet is eating more nutritious foods and eating smaller quantities. Eat leaner source proteins, fruits and vegetables and eliminate deserts, soft drinks, candy and anything else high in sugar from your diet. When you are able to take control of your eating habits and make it a lifestyle change it will become the 'new normal'. The third key to physical health is exercise. This will require you to exercise 200 minutes per week or 30 minutes per day. Make the exercise that you choose something that you enjoy and make it a part of your daily routine. It may require you to push yourself in the beginning but it will get easier and will be well worth it.

The last aspect of achieving positive health is caring for your emotional/mental health. We often receive messages about caring for our physical health through media or other sources but being proactive about taking care of our emotional or mental health is rarely something that we hear about. This is something viewed as a sign of weakness and even the term 'mental illness' bears negative connotations. The reality is that achieving positive mental health and increasing resistance to mental illness is just as important as caring for your physical health. In fact, having positive emotional/mental health will contribute a great deal to positive physical health. According to recent research:

- 7.7 million hospital days in Canada are due to mental illness and suicidal behavior
- people with mental illness, as a group, represent the most frequent category of billings by general practitioners
- mental illness and those with substance use problems represent one of the top categories of "frequent

users" of emergency room services according to Statistics Canada.

Positive mental health or well being is often associated with two qualities. The first is resiliency – the ability to rebound from life's setbacks and the second is empowerment, which means having a sense of control over your life. To be resilient, you need to learn how to cope with different situations. This is especially important in teaching as teachers are often faced with very challenging and unexpected situations that they must deal with "on the spot". Learning to cope more effectively will also mean recognizing when you are experiencing extra stress and then taking time for yourself to do something that will help take your mind off your problems and allow you to relax. This will mean different things for different people but some examples might include: taking a hot bath; doing something outdoors; learning yoga; listening to your favorite music; meditation; reading a book; walking; or jogging. Another very important aspect of positive mental health is the concept of *balance*. We are faced with many demands on our time – work, family, children, spouse or partner, friends, community, volunteer activities. We have both a right and a responsibility to be realistic about the number of demands that we place upon ourselves; hence it is important that we consider our priorities and limit how much we "take on" that we have control over. Learning to say "No" can be an essential aspect of finding balance.

Research also shows that well being and positive mental health is more likely if you develop and maintain supportive relationships with family and friends. All too often individuals get so involved with their jobs, volunteer activities and other commitments that they neglect the most important people in their lives. When this is a chronic problem over time it can have a very negative impact on all of your relationships. Sometimes the impact can be devastating and irreparable damage can be done. It is important to take the time to consider your life and where you are spending the bulk of your time. It can be helpful to make a log and record how you spend your time on a daily basis for a two or three week period and then do some honest reflection on whether you are spending adequate time on yourself or with your spouse/partner, family/children and friends. Learning how to develop balance within your life could be the most important step you take towards developing positive emotional, mental and physical health.

Kathy Taylor-Rogers is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Kathy Taylor-Rogers (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

Canadian Space Agency's 5th Annual Space Educator's Conference

Rekindle Your Interest in Space Science Education

by CATHERINE PHILLIPS

Science education is a profession. Professional development in science education is essential to keep abreast of new developments and technologies, just as in the medical professions. Professional development can occur in many settings... through sharing journal and magazine articles, through district and provincially sponsored in-services. While all these have their place in the realm of professional development, they lack the hands-on sharing of information that can occur only through interaction with bonafide space researchers or scientists.

While browsing the Canadian Space Agency website last spring, looking for information to help me address the space education outcomes in grade 6 science, I noticed that they were accepting registration for a Space Educator's Conference in Québec in August. It sounded like a great opportunity to get the most up-to-date information, resources and new ideas from experts in the field. So... I applied.

For three days in early August, I had the privilege of attending the Canadian Space Agency's 5th Annual Space Educator's Conference in Longueuil, Québec. It was without a doubt one of the most fascinating experiences of my professional life. The enthusiasm and expertise the presenters displayed for space exploration was inspiring.

The Space Educator's Conference brought together teachers from all grade levels from all across Canada to explore and enrich their understanding of space related Science curriculum. It was a three-day conference of concurrent and large group presentations. Participants chose from concurrent sessions that were applicable to primary or secondary teachers. The topics ranged from *The Anatomy of Robots* to *Microgravity*. And from *Using Science Fiction to Teach Science Facts* to *Newton's Laws of Gravity*. While the subject matter may sound intimidating, this conference was not geared towards only those with a strong background in science. The last science course I did was Biology 1011, in my first year at Memorial University in 1978. All you need to enjoy this conference is an interest in space science education.

The space educator's conference was undoubtedly one of the best organized and informative conferences I have attended. A bus picked us up at the hotel each morning to take us to the conference site and dropped us at the hotel at the end of each day's session. Sessions were offered in both English and French. Each lecture was simultaneously translated through the usage of headsets.

The presenters included scientists, engineers, military pilots and astronauts. Despite being experts in their respected fields, accustomed to dealing with very technical concepts and theories, they were all quite successful in making their areas of study fascinating and comprehensible to those of us who are not "subject specialists".

All sessions offered excellent background knowledge to the topics plus practical, inexpensive demonstrations and experiments that could be conducted in the classroom at all grade levels. My background knowledge has been increased immeasurably. The breadth of information conveyed on robotics, weather on Mars, orbits, Aurora Borealis and designing spacecraft will certainly make me feel more confident when completing the Space and Space Exploration Science unit with my class.

The conference was not limited to lectures. On the very first day we participated in a videoconference with Col. Chris Hadfield on *The Value of Robotic Manipulators in Space Education*. Another astronaut, Dr. Dave Williams, presented the closing remarks. We were treated to a tour of the John H. Chapman Space Centre, Headquarters of the Canadian Space Agency. We toured mission control, saw models of many Canadian technologies such as Canadarm 2, a robotic manipulator named Dextre and various other aspects of the operation.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Montréal Planetarium. The Planetarium graciously sponsored a relaxing evening with wine and cheese. This gave us the opportunity to view their exhibits and chat with the many people involved in the conference.

I came away from the conference with an enriched understanding of the intricacies of space exploration and an admiration for the expertise of Canadian space scientists and researchers. It was amazing to witness the effort required to complete even the simplest of tasks or experiments in space.

We also received a valuable assortment of resources such as CD-ROMs entitled, *Shake Rattle and Roll, Building Structures for Space, Space Navigation: Where Math Matters* and *The Science of Spacesuits*, a DVD of *Canada's Space Program and Your Future*, which outlines Space related job opportunities, numerous posters and an *Educator Activity Book* which included each experiment and activity that each presenter used in their presentations.

John H. Chapman Space Centre, site of the conference.

The conference will be held once again August 7-9, 2007. You may visit the Canadian Space Agency website, www.space.gc.ca, for more information. Financial support is available through the Canadian Space Agency to a limited number of participants.

While I have always had an interest in space, this conference opened my eyes to many new ideas and technologies. I hope that I will be as successful in passing on my enthusiasm for space to my students as the facilitators were during this conference.

This experience will rekindle your interest in space science education. Regardless of your degree of Science expertise, this conference will definitely provide you with the ideas, resources and activities to spark students' interest in space exploration and also to encourage reluctant learners. I would highly recommend the Space Educator's Conference to all teachers.

Catherine Phillips is a Grade 6 Intensive French Teacher at Virginia Park Elementary in St. John's.

The Times They Are A Changin'

by BEVERLEY PARK

The times they are a changin' … just one of the many well-worn phrases that have become a testament to the genius of Bob Dylan, a man whose social and political commentary transcends time. Though many have tried to describe Dylan, transcendence is perhaps the quality that best defines him. What is it that makes Dylan so enduring while others come and go? I believe that his ongoing, and some would say growing, popularity is rooted in his realism. Dylan was, after all, an average kid, from an average family, growing up in an average town … although arguably not in average times. He wrote about things that are complex in their simplicity. Real things! Real people! Real stories! Real issues! Real dilemmas!

There's nothing more real in my world than teachers – in classrooms, staffrooms, corridors and in communities. So I asked myself, if Dylan were to write about teachers, what stories would he tell? "The times they are a changin'" or are they? Anyone who has taught for a few years can attest to how we've seen old ideas re-packaged. Change the name on the binder and the "new" school growth and development model looks a lot like the not-so-old school improvement plan. And "new" Math has been around long enough that it surely has to be considered at least middle aged! Come to think of it, perhaps "What goes around, comes around" might be a more appropriate line for Dylan to work with in our context.

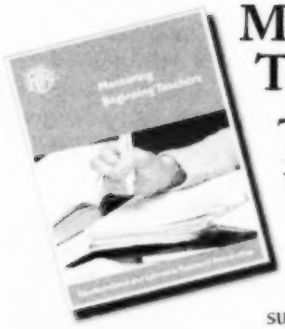
Dylan might still ask, "How many roads must a man walk down, before you can call him a man?" But, in our context, it might be a challenge to homophobia instead of racism. Think about some of the comments that are passed off as humour in our classrooms – and staffrooms! Despite our claims of openness, despite "political correctness" which causes us to pay lip service to respect, there are still too many instances of disrespect, intimidation and bullying in our schools. We still have trouble accepting anyone who is not a mirror image of ourselves.

What would Dylan, the father, write about if his kids were enrolled in a school in our province? He might wonder why "Miss" has to spend so much time coaching his kids on how to fill in bubbles using the proper HB5 pencils. He might ask why there's so little time for exploring and examining and learning, and write about the sad day when these things ceased to matter – because they couldn't be measured on a test. He might decry the fate of a disempowered teacher who wanted to teach about truth or values or living – but who fell victim to meeting "outcomes" and getting better grades on the CRT.

This article, like most, was written under the pressure of a deadline (and the indulgence of the editor). As I struggled to find an idea, Bob Dylan, who has been living in my home, traveling with me in my car, and talking in my earphones for more than 20 years (yes, Dylan diehards, I'm a relatively new fan), came to mind. I really wondered what he would say about our teachers and schools. The Dylan purists will scoff at the notion that anyone could predict Dylan – the epitome of the unpredictable!

Still, I can't help think that he'd challenge us, shake us up and wake us up. He'd remind us that doing the right thing will always trump doing things right … and he just might write about a teacher who spoke up in a union meeting. "Gather what we can from coincidence."

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.



Mentoring Beginning Teachers' Handbook

The NLTA is pleased to announce the publication of the "Mentoring Beginning Teachers' Handbook". This guide was written in honour of and in support of all those teachers who have, either formally or informally, mentored colleagues and helped them to thrive rather than simply survive in their profession.

The general concepts of the guide were developed based on observations, consultation and discussion with mentor teachers during various mentor training sessions over a number of years.

For copies please contact:

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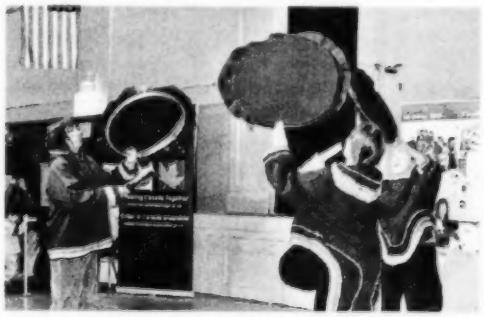
Sharing our Cultures - À la découverte de nos cultures

by LLOYDETTA QUAICOE

Sharing our Cultures - À la découverte de nos cultures, an educational and multicultural event, celebrated its 8th year on March 25-27, 2007. During the event, over 100 junior and senior high school students represented 25 cultures. These students interacted with more than 350 members of the public and almost 1,500 students. This year's theme, *Fair Play – Franc Jeu*, featured games played around the world.

Teachers and students had the opportunity of integrating bilingual, interactive and hands-on activities into their teaching and learning about diverse cultures. Government and community representatives provided valuable information on various local, national and international issues.



One of the teachers who attended the event commented: "We discussed multiculturalism through stories, other arts, meeting people and celebrating our common humanity and enriching uniqueness." Another said, "The idea of the tour guides was excellent. The fair was well organized. I liked the idea of the games; kids enjoyed it. Great job! Thank you." Another teacher remarked: "The 'show' of dances and acts captured attention; great displays and presentations at booths!"

Some of the students who attended this year's event had this to say: "I took part in the event because I would love to learn about different cultures, make new friends and learn new things."; "I had a lot of fun. It was really nice to share our cultures, to talk with the people and children and to spend time with the other students."; "I like taking part in this project so that I may not forget my own culture."; "I like this project because it is a great experience for us and for the people to know more about each other."; "I took part in this project because it's fun and I want people to learn more about where I come from and learn more about others."

This project was sponsored by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association with financial and in-kind support from Canadian Heritage, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Department of Education, the Eastern School District, CBC Radio-Canada, Memorial University, community organizations and ethnocultural communities.

Lloydetta Quaicoe is the Coordinator of Sharing Our Cultures. She can be contacted at quaicoe@gmail.com.

Education Policy Making in Canada: Risky Business

by DR. GERALD GALWAY

One of the things we struggle with in education – whether we are researchers, policy advisors, parents or practicing educators – is the question of what influences the decisions that are made about our schools. Often, when parents and teachers become aware of a new initiative, a budget decision, or a provincial policy change, they wonder how it came about and how it might affect the school community.

Many policy observers across Canada believe that these kinds of decisions should be tied more closely to research evidence. There is a growing body of opinion that suggests educational policy – like health care policy – should be more 'evidence-based'. The challenge has been to effectively convey this idea to politicians, the media and the public, who seem to push for education changes based on their own, different forms of evidence – popular sentiment or their own experiences and perceptions – rather than on research evidence. But policy making is not about finding a hundred people and asking their opinion – or is it?

Several years ago I began to look into the question of what counts as evidence for educational decision making. While this is an intriguing area, I could find no Canadian study that attempted to systematically define the factors that impact policy decisions and the extent to which each individual factor acts to influence such decisions. Even though it has become abundantly clear that educational policy making is a 'high-stakes' undertaking, we seem to know very little about how policy is constructed.

Canadians expect a great deal from their schools and from those who fund and set policy for education. The public is often critical of the education system, leading some authors to suggest that unreasonable demands are being placed on schools, particularly given the complexities of twenty-first century society. Advocacy groups, social observers, think tanks, business interests and the media often point to flaws in the system and seem to continuously call for new directions in education, while our schools are littered with the remnants of partially implemented reforms. Ben Levin, one of this country's most prominent writers on the educational reform movement, has observed that within school systems in Canada, changes are adopted and then abandoned with startling frequency. Many of the policies that are put into practice are then criticized for having been poorly conceived.

At the same time elected politicians are expected to make decisions that reflect the general public's will and desires, and this too can be a moving target. Whereas, we used to think about education primarily in terms of the development of the individual – intellectually, socially, morally and physically – for many people, schools now seem to represent a means to correct difficult social and economic problems. Meanwhile, special interest groups and the mass media tend to frame many educational issues as critical, requiring immediate policy responses from school boards and government. There are numerous examples:

- more physical education and the elimination of junk food in school cafeterias will solve the immediate problem of childhood obesity and help avoid a health care crisis in the future;
- an emphasis on enterprise education will produce potential entrepreneurs and innovators to help grow the economy;
- intensive testing and reporting of results will ensure taxpayers get a fair return on their educational investment; and the list goes on.

While it is difficult to argue with their intended outcomes, schools are still tagged with the responsibility for implementing these changes. At the same time there must be a balanced curriculum; all teachers must be current in content and pedagogy; all rights must be protected, all special needs met, all linguistic differences addressed, all religious and cultural differences respected, and a myriad of tangential special interests accommodated. We have served up a tall order for both teachers and the policy leaders who set the broader direction for education.

In my experience, political decision makers and their advisors often face considerable pressure when

developing education policy and they can easily become besieged by a litany of complaints, often from competing local, provincial, and national interests. The fact of the matter is that everyone seems to care about education and everyone has an opinion, from special interest groups to business leaders to reporters to parent groups, and yes, to university researchers. But, how do policymakers negotiate these often competing demands? What are the factors and influences they consider in formulating education policy? And, what evidence is most salient?

The Study

I asked eight Canadian ministers or former ministers of education to participate in an in-depth interview to examine these questions. The group was composed of two females and six males, all over 45 years of age and all veteran politicians, each having served more than two terms in office. The interviews were guided by these two research questions: (1) What forms of evidence are most valued in making decisions about education policy? and (2) To what extent is education research valued as 'authentic' policy evidence?

Using the same research questions, I developed and administered a questionnaire to deputy and assistant deputy ministers of education across Canada. From a comprehensive list of possible factors, I asked participants to choose those that had the most significant impact on their three most recent policy decisions or recommendations. Other questions addressed the role of various forms of research in the policy process.

This group was male-dominated – females account for less than 40 percent of education executives – and composed of highly educated, mid to late career individuals. Education executives have a broad range of administrative experience but not necessarily within schools or school boards. They are also relatively new to their positions – three out of four had been in their current jobs for six or fewer years.

The Findings

This research, completed in 2006, identified five main categories of policy evidence, ranked in order of importance (see Table 1 on page 26). Ministers claim to base their policy development practice on: (1) political considerations, which are inclusive of public opinion, pressure from special interest and advocacy groups, and the influence of the mass media; (2) pragmatic and practical considerations such as financial exigencies and governance ideology/strategic direction; (3) global (macro-level) competitive pressures; (4) expert (staff) advice; and (5) personal/professional beliefs, values and experience.

There are striking similarities in how politicians and bureaucrats represent the factors that influence policy but the relative standing or 'sequence' of each category is different. Senior executives rely heavily on the advice gathered from staff and colleagues, while politicians are more inclined to turn to political and populist forms of evidence.

Table 1: Ministers' and senior executives' representations of the most important categories of evidence for education policy development.

Ministers	Senior Executives
1. Political Considerations	1. Advise of Staff and/or Colleagues
2. Corporate and Pragmatic Considerations	2. Past Experience
3. Global (Macro level) Competitive Pressures	3. Personal and Professional Beliefs and Values
4. Advice of Staff	4. Corporate and Pragmatic Considerations
5. Personal and Professional Beliefs and Values	5. Political Considerations

To the question of research-based evidence, the findings from this study suggest that, relative to the range of other considerations, policy-relevant, external research has very marginal standing. Although policymakers say that research should play a greater role in education decision making, its influence appears more mediated than direct. Ministers perceive the work of education researchers to be somewhat foreign and detached from the policy questions that are important to government. They also see researchers as sometimes critical with respect to their public stance on education issues.

All this suggests that if research does find its way into the policy discussions of education elites, it is most likely through some form of mediation. This is because, in general, political decision makers are more inclined to pay attention to their own internal research and the advice of their policy analysts and senior staff. As such, external research, if it does reach the political level, is likely to have been interpreted, condensed and recontextualized by ministry staff. Meanwhile, the research that ministers remember or claim to have used is generally narrow and quantitative in nature, including certain outcome indicators and the results of large scale student assessments.

Implications for the School System

It seems clear that the education policy environment in Canada has become politicized and risky for policymakers. All quarters of society turn to schools to make things right, but there are many accounts of what schools need to do to achieve this and these versions of 'rightness' are constantly being reshaped and reconstructed. I suggest that the intensity and diversity of interest in education is creating untenable expectations for the kinds of outcomes that our school system can deliver. It is also putting considerable pressure on policymakers for demonstrable change within their (normally) four-year term of office.

What does this mean for education? In a politicized environment, external research, especially that which might be tacitly critical of existing policy, may represent additional political risk. Under such conditions, the values, reward systems and accountabilities against which social scientists operate are likely to differ substantively from those of politicians and bureaucrats, thereby creating a policy environment that may continue to be antagonistic to the inclusion of outside research evidence. It may well force policymakers to set aside any substantive focus on research-informed policy (which is normally a longer-term proposition) in order to attend to less risky and more immediate pragmatic and democratic/political considerations.

How Could Things Be Different?

People are passionate about education, and as each day passes Canadians raise the bar for what they expect from schools. These contextual conditions underscore the importance of referring policy decisions for consideration against the best research available to us. Policymakers need ready access to research evidence to guide their decision making, to inform the public, and perhaps more pointedly to refute incorrect information and hearsay that can so often form the substance of unqualified demand for educational change. Policymakers – and particularly those in the senior bureaucracy – would do well to seek ways and means of engaging researchers and educational leaders to play a more direct and meaningful role in creating a policy vision for education.

The kind of transformation envisaged here would require the involvement of government, educational leaders and researchers working in a genuine, cooperative way on bona fide educational problems. I am not arguing here for what has been described as a 'monopolization of expertise', nor am I suggesting that educators and researchers always know exactly, or at least better, what is right and good for everyone. But, in order for the policy pendulum to begin to swing back from a populist, (and sometimes) media-driven orientation, research-based and practitioner knowledge must advance in the queue and become a more integral aspect of policy debate. Combining

forces to collectively define the important issues, decide on the right questions and seek research-informed answers to those questions could go a long way towards achieving this goal.

The results of such efforts would need to be communicated to politicians and be widely accessible to the public. The recent effort on the part of the provincial government in this province to establish a public policy network is a positive step. The network aims to promote rational approaches in the practice of public policy while respecting the culture, traditions, history and values of our citizens. This kind of balance, should it be achieved, might well open space for greater consideration of research evidence in the policy discussions of government. In her recent book, Deborah Stone observed that "the perfectly rational decision maker is to politics what the saint is to religion". Any initiative that moves political leaders closer to sainthood can only be beneficial for our schools.

Dr. Gerald Galway is a former teacher and education policy advisor to government. He spent 16 years in various consultancy and senior management roles serving under five different governments and ten different education ministers. Before he began teaching at Memorial University he served for six years as this province's Assistant Deputy Minister of Education. (e-mail: ggalway@nl.rogers.com)

Acknowledgements

This paper is an excerpt from a larger manuscript under preparation. Sincere appreciation is extended to all those who participated in the research – former ministers of education and my former colleagues – deputy and assistant deputy ministers across Canada. I acknowledge the support of the Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Memorial University's Faculty of Education. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association for the invitation to submit this article.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' COUNCIL CONFERENCE
May 23-25, 2007
Terra Nova Golf Resort. Theme: *Instructional Leadership … and Other Duties as Assigned.* Contact: Rick Thorne, Random Island Academy, Tel: 709-547-2379 (s), Fax: 709-547-2549, richardthorne@esdnl.ca, conference website: www.sac2007.ca.

PAN CANADIAN MUSIC EDUCATION THINK TANK II
June 25-27, 2007
St. John's. Music educators are invited to come and be a part of this second national gathering, designed to address current issues and contexts in Canadian Music Education. For further details on this event and others please visit: www.cdli.ca/pancanmusic/.

SUMMER PROGRAM FOR FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS
July 1-14, 2007
Shippagan, NB. The Centre international d'apprentissage du français, located at the Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan, will be offering a two-week session of professional development and cultural experience for teachers who work in the field of French Second Language in English administered school systems (core, immersion and intensive French). Fee: $1,850 (includes courses and most of the cultural and sports activities, food and lodging). For more information contact Josée Godin, Centre international d'apprentissage du français, Université de Moncton, Tel: 506-336-3487 or toll free at 1-800-363-8336, ext. 3; Fax: 506-336-3478; josee@umcs.ca; www.umcs.ca/ciaf.

SUMMER INSTITUTE IN HUMAN RIGHTS FOR TEACHERS: TEACHING FOR AND ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS
July 22-27, 2007
St. Thomas University, Fredericton, NB. This course is designed to educate teaching professionals about the various rights, instruments and issues pertinent to human rights from international, regional and domestic perspectives. For further information contact Dr. Heather Richmond (Richmond@stu.ca), Marc Gionet (margionet@stu.ca), Tel: 506-453-7203 or visit www.stu.ca.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING DISABILITIES
September 27-29, 2007
Delta Hotel and Conference Centre, St. John's. Hosted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland & Labrador, in partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. Featuring: opening reception with Dr. Thomas E. Brown, author of *Attention Deficit Disorder: The Unfocused Mind in Children and Adults*; Dr. Mel Levine, Co-Founder "All Kinds of Minds", learning expert and author of *A Mind at a Time*; stories of hope with Leslie Coull and Frank Johnson; concurrent sessions with Dr. Thomas Brown, Dr. Robert Weaver, Mahesh C. Sharma, Nanci Bell, Barouch Chai, David Bradburn, Dr. Maggie Mamen, Dr. Mark Cooper, Dr. Anthony Colarossi, Rondalyn, Varney Whitney and others. Early bird registration (deadline: May 31, 2007): $350. Travel and accommodation discounts available. Visit www.nald.ca/ldanl for full conference details or call Debbie at 709-753-1445 (debbie.ldanl@nl.rogers.com)

Dates to Remember

May 2007

May 7	**Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
May 13-19	Branch Election Week
May 17	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

June 2007

June 8-9	NLTA Executive Meeting
June 15	**Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
June 21	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

July 2007

July 31	**Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications

Major Changes to QSP Reader's Digest Magazine Discount Program

The magazine industry in North America has forced QSP Reader's Digest to cease immediately the Teacher Discount Program in its present form of a 50% across the board discount. The present program as well is no longer available online.

The NLTA will be meeting with our representative from QSP Reader's Digest to discuss future options for this program. Information will be forwarded to schools as it becomes available.

QSP Reader's Digest

K-6 Software Recommendations Wanted

The Technology Committee of Gander Academy is currently conducting a K-6 software needs assessment. If you know of any software titles that you feel meet the outcomes of the K-6 curriculum, please e-mail your suggested software titles to Tony Norman, Gander Academy, **tnorman@ncsd.ca**. We will gladly e-mail the suggested titles (once compiled) to any individual upon request.